IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) An autonomic e-mail processing system for use on a voluntary basis by senders and recipients as part of an e-mail server system, the autonomic e-mail processing system comprising:

a first component for enabling a sender of an e-mail message to designate a first e-mail message for autonomic processing, the first e-mail message having at least an address portion which identifies a plurality of intended recipients and a note portion which contains information to be sent to the intended recipients of the e-mail;

a second component for identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the autonomic processing system;

a third component operable to enable intended recipients to indicate that an autonomic response is being sent in response to the first e-mail message;

a fourth component for identifying each autonomic response to the first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for first e-mail message forms a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing system;

a fifth component operable to enable the sender of the first e-mail message to designate that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed; and

a sixth component operable to inform at least a plurality of the intended recipients that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed.

2. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 1, wherein:

the first component includes first means for causing to be displayed a first indicator that is at least temporarily associated with the first e-mail message and is visually discernable by the sender, with at least a portion of the first indicator being operable to be selected by the sender in order to designate the first e-mail message for autonomic processing;

the second component includes second means for causing to be displayed a second indicator that is at least temporarily associated with the first e-mail message, is visually discernable by the sender and displays a representation associated with at least part of the unique sending identification number associated with the first e-mail message;

the third component includes third means for causing to be displayed a plurality of third indicators that are each at least temporarily associated with the first e-mail message and visually discernable by at least a plurality of recipients of the first e-mail message, each on their own respective screen, with the third indicators being respectively operable to be selected by such recipients to designate their respective response to the first e-mail message as an autonomic response; and

the fourth component includes fourth means for causing to be displayed a plurality of fourth indicators each associated with a respective autonomic response to the first e-mail message and visually discernable by at least the sender of the first e-mail message, with each such fourth indicator operable to display a representation associated with at least part of the unique combination identification number associated with that autonomic response.

3. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 2, wherein the first and third indicators each include radio buttons, and the second and fourth indicators each include an area for displaying a string of characters, with at least a plurality of characters being selected from a group of characters consisting of letters, numbers, punctuation marks and symbols.

4. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 2, wherein:

the fifth component includes fifth means for causing to be displayed a fifth indicator at least temporarily associated with the first e-mail message and visually discernable by the sender, that is operable to have at least a portion thereof be selected by the sender in order to designate that the autonomic processing for the first e-mail message has been completed; and

the sixth component includes sixth means for causing to be displayed a plurality of sixth indicators associated at least temporarily with at least the first e-mail message and visually discernable by at least the sender and a plurality of the intended recipients, each on their own respective screen, the sixth indicators each being operable to display a representation indicating that the processing of the first e-mail message is completed.

5. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 2, wherein fifth indicator includes a radio button, and the sixth indicators each include an area for displaying a string of characters, with at least a plurality of the characters being selected from a group of characters consisting of letters, numerals, punctuation marks and symbols.

6. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for generating sending identification numbers (SIDs) that are unique, relative to each original autonomic e-mail message at least presently in the processing system that was sent for the first time by a sender to a plurality of recipients; and

means for generating responding identification numbers (RIDs) for identifying each autonomic response to the first e-mail message, with each such generated RID in combination with an associated SID, being a unique combined identification number (CID) relative to other autonomic e-mail messages and autonomic responses presently within the autonomic e-mail processing system.

7. (Original)   The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 1, further comprising:

first means for designating autonomic e-mail messages within the e-mail system so as to distinguish them from non-autonomic e-mail messages;

second means for designating autonomic e-mail messages as being in process and as having been completed;

means for automatically generating unique sending identification numbers for use by the second component; and

means for automatically generating responding identification numbers for use by the fourth component.

8. (Original)   The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 1, in which the e-mail server system is resident on an e-mail server computer system which is operable to interact with a plurality of individual computer stations arranged for use by senders and recipients of e-mail messages, and wherein:

the processing system is implemented with a client/server architecture having a server side resident at least primarily on the e-mail server computer system and a having a client side that is operable to communicate with the plurality of individual computer stations.

9. (Original)   The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 8, wherein:

the server side has at least one program in communication with the e-mail server system; and the client side has at least one program operable to project at least parts of the first, third, fifth and sixth components to at least appear to be present from time to time on the plurality of individual computer stations.

10. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a seventh component operable to enable an intended recipient of the first e-mail message that is responding thereto to indicate that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed; and

an eighth component operable to inform at least a plurality of the intended recipients that the processing of the first e-mail message is considered, by at least one of the recipients, to be completed.

11. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 10, wherein:

the seventh component includes means for causing to be displayed a plurality of seventh indicators at least temporarily associated with the first e-mail message and visually discernable by a plurality of the intended recipients, each on their own respective screen, the seventh indicators each being operable to have at least a portion thereof selected by its respective intended recipient in order to designate that the autonomic processing for the first e-mail message is considered, by that recipient, to be completed; and

the eighth component includes means for causing to be displayed a plurality of eighth indicators associated at least temporarily with at least the first e-mail message and visually discernable by at least the sender and a plurality of the intended recipients, each on their own respective screen, the eighth indicators each being operable to display a representation indicating that the processing of the first e-mail message is considered, by a recipient, to be completed.

12. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 11, wherein:

the seventh indicators each include a radio button; and

the eighth indicators each include an area for displaying a representation of the identity of the recipient who considered the processing of the first e-mail message to be completed.

13. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 11, further comprising:

a ninth component operable by the sender of the first e-mail message for deselecting the selection made by an intended recipient via the seventh component.

14. (Original) The autonomic e-mail processing system of Claim 13, wherein the ninth component includes a third radio button that is selectable by the sender of the first e-mail message for deselecting the "Completed Yet" selection made by an intended recipient.

15 -34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended)   A computer program product, to be used in conjunction with an e-mail system having as least one computer having at least one processing circuit, the ~~software~~ computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by at least the one processing circuit and storing instructions for execution ~~for~~ by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of ~~B~~:

(a)   providing means for a plurality of senders of e-mail messages within an organization to designate selected e-mail messages of theirs and responses thereto for autonomic processing;

(b)   designating, via a selection made by a first sender, at least a first e-mail message for autonomic processing;

(c)   identifying a plurality of intended recipients in an address portion of such first e-mail message, and entering information in a note portion of such first e-mail message;

(d)   identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the e-mail system;

(e)   providing means for each intended recipient of such first e-mail message to indicate that an autonomic response is being sent in response thereto;

(f)   identifying each autonomic response to such first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for such first e-mail message within the e-mail system is unique;

(g)   providing means to enable the sender of such first e-mail message to indicate that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed; and

(h)   informing at least a plurality of the intended recipients that the processing of such first e-mail message has been completed.